

## Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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R 210835Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9579

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 4904

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, LA, US

SUBJECT: CALL ON PATHET LAO MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS

REF: VIENTIANE 4885

1. USAID DIRECTOR MANN AND I MET ON JUNE 18 WITH PATHET LAO MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS SINGKAPO SIKOTCHOUNNAMALY AND HIS SECRETARY OF STATE HOUMPHANH SAIGNASITH FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF. THE MEETING HAD BEEN ARRANGED AS A RESULT OF CONCERNS THE MINISTER HAD EXPRESSED TO PHAMPHAN PANYA, THE LAO AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO THE US, REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF US WITHDRAWING EQUIPMENT FROM THE MINISTRY. IT WAS A BUSINESS-LIKE AND USEFUL MEETING. THE MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE HAD EVIDENTLY DONE THEIR HOME WORK. THEY HAD MET WITH THE MINISTRY'S DIRECTORS AND HAD A LIST OF HALF A DOZEN SPECIFIC QUESTIONS. WE WENT DOWN THIS LIST ONE AT A TIME AND MR. MANN PROVIDED ANSWERS THAT CLEARLY WERE RESPONSIVE TO THEIR CONCERNS. ALTHOUGH SINGKAPO SPEAKS AND UNDERSTANDS FRENCH, HE PREFERRED TO LET HOUMPHANH, WHO IS ABLE AND INTELLIGENT, CARRY ON THE CONVERSATION AND

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TRANSLATE FOR HIM. FOLLOWING ARE QUESTIONS DISCUSSED.

A. MINISTRY HAS PLANNED FOR FY 75 A ROAD BUILDING PROGRAM OF 461 MILLION KIP. THE MINISTRY IS PREPARED TO MAKE A LARGER CONTRIBUTION NEXT YEAR THAN IT DID LAST AND MINISTER WONDERED WHETHER IT COULD COUNT ON AN AID LEVEL OF 300 MILLION KIP. MR. MANN INDICATED THAT THIS MIGHT WELL BE POSSIBLE.

B. LAST YEAR USAID HAD PROVIDED SOME 1.6 MILLION DOLLARS OF ASSISTANCE TO HELP THE MINISTRY'S SPARE PARTS, POL AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS. COULD THEY EXPECT A COMPARABLE LEVEL NEXT YEAR? MR. MANN ANSWERED THAT IN PRINCIPLE SUCH ASSISTANCE COULD BE CONTINUED BUT THAT NO DEFINITE FIGURE COULD BE PROVIDED UNTIL CONGRESS HAD VOTED THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT.

C. ON THE OWNERSHIP OF THE EQUIPMENT, MR. MANN VERY CAREFULLY EXPLAINED THAT THERE ARE TWO PUBLIC WORKS ENTITIES IN LAOS, THE MINISTRY AND THE PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION OF USSAID. AS REGARDS THE FIRST, THE EQUIPMENT AT THE MINISTRY BELONGS OUTRIGHT TO THE RLG. AS REGARDS THE SECOND, THE DIVISION IS BEING PHASED OUT AND ITS EQUIPMENT WILL BE TURNED OVER TO THE MINISTRY. HOWEVER, MR. MANN POINTED OUT THAT BEFORE THIS WAS DONE WE WOULD WANT TO MAKE A CAREFUL INVENTORY WITH THE LAO OF WHAT EQUIPMENT WAS IN SATISFACTORILY OPERATING CONDITION. IT WAS UNECONOMICAL AND A WASTE OF RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN WORN OUT EQUIPMENT.

D. THERE SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN SOME CONFUSION REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MINISTRY'S SPARE PART WAREHOUSE AT ITS CENTRAL MAINTENANCE INSTALLATION IN VIENTIANE. MR. MANN CAREFULLY POINTED OUT THAT SPARE PARTS AT THE MINISTRY'S INSTALLATION ARE LAO PROPERTY AND USAID WAS PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN MANAGING THE WAREHOUSE. AS FAR AS SPARE PARTS AND EQUIPMENT OF USAID'S PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION WERE CONCERNED, MR. MANN SAID THEY WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO THE MINISTRY BETWEEN NOW AND DECEMBER 31, 1974. HOWEVER, MR. MANN WARNED THAT IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS A SUCCESSFUL

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PUBLIC WORKS MINISTRY DEPENDS ON THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF ITS STOCKS TO INSURE THE CONTINUING OPERATION OF ITS EQUIPMENT. STOCK MANAGEMENT HAS BECOME A PROFESSION IN ITSELF, AND IT WAS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO MAKE SURE THERE WAS PROPERLY TRAINED PERSONNEL TO DO THE JOB.

E. IN DISCUSSING FUTURE PLANS FOR ROAD BUILDING, SINGKAPO INDICATED THAT WORK WAS ALREADY PROCEEDING

IN THE PATHET LAO ZONE ON IMPROVING ROUTE 7 FROM XIENG KHOUANG TO NORTH VIETNAM AND THAT IT WAS VERY MUCH HIS IDEA TO DEVELOP THAT ROAD TO ITS LINK WITH ROUTE 13, THE MAIN LUANG PRABANG/VIENTIANE ROAD.

F. LASTLY, THEY INDICATED GREAT APPRECIATION FOR THE WELL DRILLING EFFORT OF USAID AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT IT WOULD BE CONTINUED THIS YEAR. MR. MANN ALSO RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY.

G. SINGKAPO RAISED THE QUESTION OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS. MR. MANN ANSWERED THAT IN HIS ENTIRE MISSION THERE WERE ONLY ABOUT 120, MANY OF WHOM WERE ACCOUNTANTS AND FEW WITH THE PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION. WE BOTH EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS THE GENERAL POLICY OF THE AMERICAN MISSION TO PHASE OUT AS MANY AS POSSIBLE THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS FROM POSITIONS FOR WHICH TRAINED LAO COULD BE FOUND.

2. MR. MANN'S ANSWERS CLEARLY WERE VERY SATISFACTORY TO SINGKAPO AND HE SEEMED VERY APPRECIATIVE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS ALL THESE MATTERS.

3. COMMENT: MEETING, WHICH WAS MR. MANN'S SECOND WITH MINISTER, WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL. SINGKAPO HAS REPUTATION OF, AND COMES THROUGH AS, STRAIGHTFORWARD AND RATHER SIMPLE MAN. WE HAVE NOW GIVEN EVIDENCE OF OUR WILLINGNESS TO WORK COOPERATIVELY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH HIS MINISTRY; AND HE APPEARS TO BE RESPONSIVE TO SUCH A RELATIONSHIP. HOW IT WILL TURN OUT IN FUTURE, WHETHER DIRECTIVES FROM SAM NEUA WILL ALTER HIS ATTITUDE, REMAINS TO BE SEEN. BUT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A POINT OF REFERENCE FROM WHICH TO MEASURE OUR RELATIONSHIP  
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WITH THIS PATHET LAO MINISTER.  
CHAPMAN

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## Message Attributes

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